

189.635 Vehicle accident reports by operators, law enforcement officers, and agencies -- Availability to parties to accident and news-gathering organizations.

- (1) The Justice Cabinet, Department of State Police, shall be responsible for maintaining a reporting system for all vehicle accidents which occur within the Commonwealth. Such accident reports shall be utilized for such purposes as will improve the traffic safety program in the Commonwealth involving the collection, processing, storing, and dissemination of such data and the establishment of procedures by administrative regulations to insure that uniform definitions, classifications, and other federal requirements are in compliance.
- (2) Any person operating a vehicle on the highways of this state who is involved in an accident resulting in fatal or nonfatal personal injury to any person or damage to the vehicle rendering the vehicle inoperable shall be required to immediately notify a law enforcement officer having jurisdiction. In the event the operator fails to notify or is incapable of notifying a law enforcement officer having jurisdiction, such responsibility shall rest with the owner of the vehicle or any occupant of the vehicle at the time of the accident. A law enforcement officer having jurisdiction shall investigate the accident and file a written report of the accident with his law enforcement agency.
- (3) Every law enforcement agency whose officers investigate a vehicle accident of which a report must be made as required in this chapter shall file a report of the accident with the Department of State Police within ten (10) days after investigation of the accident upon forms supplied by the department.
- (4) Any person operating a vehicle on the highways of this state who is involved in an accident resulting in any property damage exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) in which an investigation is not conducted by a law enforcement officer shall file a written report of the accident with the Department of State Police within ten (10) days of occurrence of the accident upon forms provided by the department.
- (5) All accident reports filed with the Department of State Police in compliance with subsection (4) above shall remain confidential except that the department may disclose the identity of a person involved in an accident when his identity is not otherwise known or when he denies his presence at an accident. Except as provided in subsection (7) of this section, all other accident reports required by this section, and the information contained in the reports, shall be confidential and exempt from public disclosure except when produced pursuant to a properly executed subpoena or court order, or except pursuant to subsection (6) of this section. These reports shall be made available only to the parties to the accident, the parents or guardians of a minor who is party to the accident, and the insurers of any party who is the subject of the report, or to the attorneys of the parties.
- (6) The report shall be made available to a news-gathering organization, solely for the purpose of publishing or broadcasting the news. The news-gathering organization shall not use or distribute the report, or knowingly allow its use or distribution, for a commercial purpose other than the news-gathering organization's publication or broadcasting of the information in the report. A newspaper, periodical, or radio or

television station shall not be held to have used or knowingly allowed the use of the report for a commercial purpose merely because of its publication or broadcast.

- (7) The motor vehicle insurers of any train engineer or other train crew member involved in an accident on a railroad while functioning in their professional capacity shall be prohibited from obtaining a copy of any accident report filed on the accident under this section without written consent from the individual the company insures. Insurance companies issuing motor vehicle policies in the Commonwealth shall be prohibited from raising a policyholder's rates solely because the policyholder, in his or her professional capacity, is a train engineer or other train crew member involved in an accident on a railroad.

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History: Amended 2000 Ky. Acts ch. 497, sec. 2, effective July 14, 2000. -- Amended 1994 Ky. Acts ch. 478, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1994. -- Amended 1990 Ky. Acts ch. 94, sec. 1, effective July 13, 1990. -- Amended 1976 Ky. Acts ch. 194, sec. 1, effective January 1, 1977. -- Created 1974 Ky. Acts ch. 335, sec. 1.